

Africa *Fam.* *Stock, E.* 62
Kikuyu Tracts

THE CHURCH IN THE MISSION FIELD

By *2*
Eugene Stock, D.C.L.

Longmans, Green and Co.
39 Paternoster Row, London
New York, Bombay, and Calcutta

1914

Price One Penny Net

EDITORS' NOTE

THE object of this series is to throw light upon problems felt for some time past in the mission field, and lately brought to public notice by the Kikuyu Conference. For the missionaries and the young Native Churches, face to face with the great forces of heathenism and Islam, questions of co-operation of necessity arise as practical politics demanding careful consideration and wise handling. The writers do not attempt to discuss the immediate points at issue, but rather aim at giving help towards clear thinking on the larger questions which lie behind. Each author is entirely responsible for his own pamphlet and for that alone.

THE CHURCH IN THE MISSION FIELD

THE work of Missions is twofold—to proclaim the Gospel and to build the Church. The fact that it is twofold is not always recognised. Preaching the Gospel is by many persons supposed to be the whole duty of the missionary. But those who think so forget the teachings of that Book of Evangelisation, the Acts of the Apostles, which tells us how the work began. The Day of Pentecost itself saw the commencement of both the great branches of the missionary enterprise. St. Peter proclaimed the Glad Tidings, and the eager question of his hearers showed that the Spirit Who had descended that day had indeed touched their hearts. What then? They were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and that baptism meant not only their public acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, but their admission into the Church that day openly established. They were “added,” we are told (Acts ii. 41). Added to what? To the Divine Society of which the small nucleus of believing disciples already existed. The very next words are, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” So began the Holy Catholic Church, “the holy Church throughout all the world.” And three times more do we come upon that word “added” (ii. 47, v. 14, xi. 24). Constant additions to the one body.

2 The Church in the Mission Field

So throughout the Acts. Wherever St. Paul and the other Apostles preached, and men believed the Message, and were baptized, there the Church was set up. Ministries were provided for it. The Ascended Lord, we are told, "gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). St. Paul "appointed elders in every Church" (Acts xiv. 23), who are sometimes called "bishops" or "overseers" (Acts xx. 17, 28, Phil. i. 1, 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, Titus i. 7-9); and "deacons" for auxiliary service (Phil. i. 1, 1 Tim. iii. 8-13). And three at least of the Epistles (1 Cor., 1 Tim., Titus) are largely occupied with details of Church organisation and worship.

Everywhere Baptism was the entrance gate into the Church; and the Supper of the Lord was the manifestation of His Presence in the Church, and of its life as one Body under one Divine Head. Thus from the beginning there were the Two Historic Sacraments. Gradually, under Divine guidance, was settled the Historic Canon of Scripture, the Two Testaments, as the one Rule of Faith; gradually, the Two Historic Creeds, as the elementary exposition of the Faith; gradually, the Historic Three Orders developed out of the early Ministries.

Thus grew the Visible Church Catholic. It is to be carefully distinguished from "the Church" in the higher spiritual sense, called by our Prayer Book "the mystical Body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." For our present purpose we have to do with the Visible Church, the Church Catholic, which has its external Creeds and Sacraments and Ministries, but which is far from the ideal,

being a mixed body comprising "all who profess and call themselves Christians." The distinction corresponds with that under the Old Dispensation, when, as St. Paul says, "all were not Israel who were of Israel."

Now when a new Mission in a non-Christian country is set on foot, its first duty is to deliver the Divine Message. However simply and earnestly this may be done, the missionary soon realises that only Divine Power can give effect to the Message, by opening the minds of the hearers to grasp it and their hearts to accept it, and by turning them from sin to righteousness. But even this mighty change the Holy Ghost does effect, as multitudes can testify. The day comes when the first converts are baptized, and the Visible Church of Christ is founded in that country. It may be that at first the Visible Church and the "mystical Body" are identical; but even in that case so happy a state of things cannot last. Inevitably we very soon see nominal as well as real Christianity, and, by and by, hereditary Christianity. It is this imperfect Church with which we are now concerned.

Moreover, there is another cause of weakness. The Catholic Church in the world is not now one great undivided body, nor has it been so for centuries. We need not discuss causes; we can only accept facts. But the result in the mission field is that the work of evangelisation and of building up the Church can only be done imperfectly. If the Catholic Church had but remained one, and if it had faithfully held fast God's truth, and if it had set itself to fulfil its Lord's great Commission, the task might have been completed long ago, and the Lord Christ might ere now have come into His Kingdom. Instead of which He still sits on the right hand of God, "expecting"!

Still, the work is going on, slowly and inadequately

4 The Church in the Mission Field

on account of our unhappy divisions, yet going on. The different sections into which, in the course of ages, the Catholic Church has become separated are, most of them, doing something. All of them, or almost all, have their Missions; many of them have now large communities of Christian converts, gathered from all the races of mankind; many are earnestly seeking to build up the Church. But each section does this in its own way; each builds on its own lines, and founds Churches marked by its own distinctive features; and for the most part the Churches so formed hold no communion with one another. Taken individually, many of them, with whatever defects, present on the whole a bright picture as compared with the surrounding heathen. But being as Churches quite separate, there is no common organic life. The result is weakness where there might be strength; possibly coldness where there might be warmth; often rivalry where each ought to esteem others better than itself. The whole Christian enterprise suffers sorely. This state of things, however, is not the fault of the missionaries. They are rightly bound by their allegiance to the Churches or Societies which have severally sent them out.

The Church which has by far the most extensive Missions in the world brings all the millions of its converts under the direct sway of the See of Rome; and, it must be added, enjoins doctrines and practices unknown to the original Church of Christ. Most of the others encourage their converts to look forward to the organisation of some kind of autonomous Churches, self-governing, self-supporting, self-extending. In some cases every local congregation is taught that it is already independent of all the rest. Some congregations are linked together by the ties of a common

system of ministry and government, which, while reducing the ancient Three Orders to two, guards the succession with especial care. Others, with less definite order as regards the ministry, are united by a common practice in respect of baptism, particularly the limitation of its privileges to adults. Meanwhile, the Anglican Communion stands on the old historic and catholic paths in respect of the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Sacraments, the Three Orders of Ministry, while rejecting the innovations of Rome ; at the same time deliberately preparing the way for the establishment of strong autonomous Churches, national or otherwise, free to work out their own development without (if certain conditions are observed) losing connection with the Mother Church.

When we ask what prospects there are of avoiding all these Western divisions in the African and Asiatic Churches of the future, we are met at once with what seem insuperable difficulties. For one thing, the great Roman Church regards all the others alike as schismatical, and outside the pale of the true Church altogether ; and she declines any sort of union or co-operation save on the one condition of allegiance to the Papal See. Moreover she regards it as her duty to proselytise from among the members of the other Churches quite as much as to convert non-Christians, and her missionaries are zealous in enrolling such proselytes. The Anglican Communion, the ancient Eastern Churches, and the obscurest of Protestant sects, are treated exactly alike in this respect. On the other hand, the members of the other Churches and denominations, with a very few exceptions, are themselves not prepared for co-operation with the Roman Church while she continues to hold what they regard as grave errors. Any prospect

6 The Church in the Mission Field

of union or of federation between them and her is too remote for present consideration ; while it is fully recognised that the widest Church union is necessarily imperfect so long as the largest of all Churches is outside it.

The difficulty of co-operation with the Orthodox and other Oriental Churches is apparently not so insuperable ; but their Missions are few and small, and the problem is not an urgent one.

Turning to the possibilities of the mutual co-operation in the mission field of the other Christian bodies, and of the future union of the African and Asiatic Churches which they are building up, we are met with the further difficulty of a considerable scepticism as to the value of such co-operation or union.

On one side there are Anglicans who, while not objecting to negotiations with other Protestant Churches and denominations *per se*, fear that any drawing towards them may hinder a corresponding drawing towards the ancient Western and Eastern Churches. But suppose the Reformed Anglican Church and the Churches of the Reformation had been from the first not several, but one ; or, if we limit our speculation to the English-speaking peoples, suppose the Church in England and Scotland had remained one, and no secessions had subsequently taken place, so that now Great Britain and her Colonies and the United States had one great Church (barring the Romans, &c.), would not any possible negotiations with the Western and Eastern Churches have been far easier than they can be in existing circumstances ? To the present writer it seems that the reunion of Protestant Christendom, so far from being a hindrance to any further union, would be its indispensable prerequisite, and the surest preparation for it.

On the other side we have to face the fact that many members of the non-episcopal communions in Great Britain and America see no harm in our present divisions, and no good purpose in plans for reunion. They are ready for intercommunion as we are, and think that the spiritual unity in Christ of all true believers in Him is the only thing worth aiming at. They do not realise the tremendous loss which English-speaking Christendom sustains by having no common organic life. They fail to see that if in India, in China, in Africa, the non-Roman Missions (at least) were one body, representing one great Home Church, the whole problem of the Evangelisation of the World would be simplified.

It so happens that there is a signal illustration of this in the case of Uganda. In Uganda there is, besides the Roman Mission, only one Mission, the Anglican; and the result is that, instead of half a dozen relatively small and weak bands of Christians unconnected with one another, as in almost all other mission fields, we see one strong Church, self-governing, largely self-supporting, extending its influence into countries all around. A real rampart has been built up against the Mohammedan advance from the north, which is sweeping over all other parts of Equatorial Africa. Obviously the effect would be yet greater if instead of two Churches, Roman and Anglican, there were only one; but two are better than a dozen.

Admitting, however, that Home Reunion cannot be speedily hoped for, and that consequently the Missions of the different Churches and denominations will continue much as they are, is there no way of minimising the inevitable disadvantages resulting therefrom in the mission field? To do so, by bringing the Missionary Societies together in more definite co-operation, has

8 The Church in the Mission Field

been the purpose of the remarkable Conferences held by Dr. Mott in India and the Far East. To do so was the object of the Kikuyu Conference. Any conceivable proposals in this direction must necessarily be open to criticism. Our differences are real differences, and must find expression. But if there were at least a general goodwill in the matter—a readiness to see the other side—a willingness to make such sacrifices as can be made without compromising fundamental principle—the problem surely ought not to be insoluble.

Anglicans, indeed, should be the last to oppose such a movement. It is obvious that although they are almost everywhere in the minority, sometimes a small minority, they are, as a matter of fact, often expected to take a lead; and this lead will the more be yielded to them as they show more consideration for the views and feelings and usages of others. If they hold aloof, or take a stiff and unyielding attitude regarding minor matters, they will indeed incur a grave responsibility. There are signs that ere long, if we do not move, the Indian and Chinese Christians will take the matter into their hands, and form a great united Church of their own without us. If this should happen, it would certainly be difficult, even if it were desirable, to prevent the converts of Anglican Missions from joining it. But let the movement towards organic unity in the growing Churches be welcomed, and wisely guided upon sound principles, and under God's good providence such a Church shall be built up in each great field as shall prove a power in the midst of surrounding heathenism and a blessing to the whole people.

The Kikuyu Conference. A Study in Christian Unity. By J. J. WILLIS, Bishop of Uganda. 8vo. Paper Covers, 6d.

KIKUYU TRACTS

The Confirmation Rubric: Whom Does it Bind?

By the Rev. H. M. GWATKIN, D.D.

"That they All may be One."

By the BISHOP OF DURHAM.

The Church in the Mission Field.

By EUGENE STOCK, D.C.L.

The Ministry and Unity.

By the Rev. F. S. GUY WARMAN, D.D.

Episcopacy (1) In Scripture.

„ (2) In the Church of England.

By the Rev. H. M. GWATKIN, D.D.

The Limits of Ritual and Ceremonial in the Anglican Communion.

By P. V. SMITH, LL.D.

What is our Deposit?

By the Rev. A. J. TAIT, D.D.

What is the Church?

By the Right Rev. C. F. D'ARCY, D.D.,
Bishop of Down.

How it Happens.

By GEORGE ANTHONY KING, M.A.

The following subjects will also be dealt with:—

Co-operation at Home.

Co-operation in the Mission Field.

One Penny each Net

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.

LONDON, NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA